

CHAPTER II

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS & CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The Memphis MPO emphasizes a strong commitment to public participation in all of its on-going program activities. The objective of the approved *Memphis MPO Citizen Participation Plan* (see **Appendix B, Citizen Participation Plan**) is to re-affirm the organization's commitment through a specific plan of action to provide timely and meaningful opportunity for public involvement in developing the LRTP for the planning region. The MPO has sought to raise the level of public involvement in the development and preparation of all transportation plans and studies. MPO staff provided opportunities for public input into the project selection and plan preparation process.

These opportunities were formally provided during 2003 as part of the process of informing the various MPO committees and boards on the progress of developing growth assumptions and goals proposed for inclusion in the draft LRTP. **Appendix C, ETC and RAB Developmental Meeting Summary for LRTP**, outlines the Engineering & Technical Committee (ETC) and the Regional Advisory Board (RAB) meetings that are open to all interested parties (meeting agendas and minutes are included).

A. Memphis MPO Prospectus

In addition to developing and maintaining a LRTP, TIP and the UPWP, the Memphis MPO has adopted a document entitled the *Memphis MPO Prospectus*, which serves three important functions in the transportation planning process. First, it provides an overview of the federally mandated "3C" (comprehensive, continuing, cooperative) transportation planning process as defined by TEA-21. Second, it defines the roles and responsibilities of the various federal, state and local agencies and entities involved in the Memphis MPO transportation planning process. Third, it documents the interagency agreements that have been or will be entered into between Memphis MPO, TDOT and MDOT. These agreements further define the specific responsibilities and obligations of each agency. The *Memphis MPO Prospectus* will be updated to reflect any new or amended agreements with appropriate local jurisdiction and agencies as the Executive Board adopts them.

The *Memphis MPO Prospectus* is designed to serve as a common reference for all parties interested and involved in the regional transportation planning process in the Memphis urbanized area of Tennessee, and it details how that process will be implemented by the Memphis MPO. Information contained in the *Memphis MPO Prospectus* augments much of the text contained in this plan. It is recommended that the reader refer to that document for additional background on the Memphis MPO transportation planning process and the roles of the various agencies and entities. A copy is available for review in the MPO Office or the DPD website at www.DPDGOV.com and libraries in Fayette, DeSoto and Shelby counties.

B. 2026 Plan Development Process

1. Updating the Plan

In early 2003, through the committee and board structure of the MPO, meetings, workshops and public hearings were held to determine consensus on the basic transportation policies of this plan. These workshops and meetings resulted in the decision to make this update of the plan a continuation of the current long-range transportation plan. New growth projections were estimated, and transportation issues facing the Memphis MPO were examined to effectively focus this new plan on relevant issues over the next three years that would meet the overall goals of the 2023 LRTP as well as develop additional goals based on newly identified issues. The planning analyses are a composite of the following plans and policies of the various member agencies of the Memphis MPO, as well as other supporting documents:

- *Growth Plan of Shelby County, Tennessee adopted in 2000*
- *Growth Plan of Fayette County, Tennessee adopted in August 2003*
- *Desoto County Land Use Plan* (currently under review for adoption by the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors)
- *Gray's Creek Plan*
- *MATA Regional Rail Program*
- *Shelby County Government Smart Growth Initiative*
- *Memphis Regional Source Book*
- *Memphis 2005 Plan*
- *Riverfront Master Plan*

2. Public Outreach

As required by TEA-21, the Memphis MPO has adopted and incorporated a process for soliciting public involvement for all MPO transportation-planning efforts as reflected in *the Memphis MPO Citizen Participation Plan*. The update of the regional long-range transportation plan involved more extensive public outreach efforts than exhibited in the previous plan preparation process.

In an effort to increase citizen involvement in future planning efforts- especially among minorities and low-income residents, the MPO will continue to develop studies that identify such groups, the specific issues they face in regard to access and mobility and potential solutions.

3. Planning

In order to fully implement TEA-21, CAAA, TITLE VI and EJ the Memphis MPO utilizes a set of project selection procedures in the development of the TIP. These procedures were developed in 1994 by the Memphis MPO Engineering and Technical

Committee with input from the general public and elected officials and amended during each subsequent round to improve the TIP development process. The Memphis MPO required that each municipality and relevant agency be given the opportunity to propose projects through the LRTP and TIP project selection process. Staff evaluated projects from these and other organizations based on regional significance, need or urgency and consistency as they relate to the goals of the plan.

Meetings were conducted with community interest groups and the general public in order to discuss planning requirements and to solicit policy and technical comments. Information was disseminated and comments were received. Comments and recommendations were presented to the members of the various committees and boards of the MPO and the LRTP was then finalized.

In accordance with the MPO policy for public participation, a formal comment period on the draft plan was provided. Public announcements were made through various media outlets, including a local Spanish newspaper. These announcements included specific information on the review period, public availability of the draft plan, and the public meeting schedule. Copies of the draft plan were available for review in the MPO Office or the DPD website at www.DPDGOV.com and libraries in Fayette, DeSoto and Shelby counties. Numerous public meetings were held throughout the region where a presentation of the plan was made, copies of the plan were made available for inspection, and public comment was received. A summary of public comments is provided in **Appendix D, Public Participation Summary.**

4. Plan Adoption and Amendment Procedure

Adoption of the transportation plan, or adoption of amendments to the plan, follows the same basic approval procedures. There are three scenarios of amendments (Policy Amendment, Fiscal Amendment and Regionally Significant Amendment), not mutually exclusive, that may require specific documentation. Amendments may be presented for consideration by member agencies or the staff of the MPO. Such amendments may be products of other planning processes of those agencies that require inclusion the transportation plan.

The plan or amendment is presented to the public through public notification as required in the *Memphis MPO Citizen Participation Plan*. Public notification in approved newspapers of general circulation includes how and where the public can review the plan or amendment and affords the public a comment period lasting a minimum of 30 days prior to adoption. Public meetings may have been held prior to this notification if the plan or amendment is the product of other accepted planning processes. During the 30-day comment period, the MPO, at its published meetings of the Executive Board and RAB, also accepts public comments.

The Executive Board and RAB are advised of any public comments received. The Boards take into consideration comments presented at each meeting when deciding what

action should be taken or amendments made. The boards then act to recommend approval or rejection or may defer approval for additional study and comments.

A plan or amendment that requires demonstration of fiscal constraint or air quality conformity, while adopted, is not effective until the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), with consultation from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), gives approval. These approvals may require up to 45 days from the date of submission to these federal agencies.

A detailed outline of the approval process for the transportation plan is provided in the *Memphis MPO Citizen Participation Plan* along with the procedure for submitting amendments to the plan.

SUPPORT OF LRTP 2026 GOALS

While supporting all of the goals of the LRTP 2026, Chapter 2, Transportation Planning Process & Citizen Participation, specifically addresses the following goals and objectives:

- **Continue to ensure the MPO enforces and promotes adherence to Title VI and the *President's Executive Order on Environmental Justice*.**
 - Present opportunities for public participation in the planning process without regard to race, color or national origin.
 - Continue to collect and analyze socio-economic data for the Memphis MPO region in an effort to make more informed decisions regarding transportation and its potential effects on all area citizens.
 - Consider the impacts of transportation projects on all communities potentially affected by such projects.
 - Continue to take the necessary corrective action to prevent discrimination in the planning process based on race, color or national origin.
- **Develop a cost effective planning process that maximizes community consensus in all aspects of transportation planning**
 - Continue to explore different techniques to increase citizen participation in the planning process
- **Enhance the MPO's relationship with other regional planning entities**
 - Design a process to share data and other forms of information with the West Memphis MPO and other pertinent groups
 - Work with West Memphis MPO and other transportation entities to ensure regional coordination on transportation and air quality planning activities